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Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment
in a Transboundary Context

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention
on Environmental Impact Assessment in
a Transboundary Context serving as the
Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on
Strategic Environmental Assessment

Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment

Fourth meeting
Geneva, 26–28 May 2015
Item 1 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda

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Please recycle

Annotated provisional agenda for the fourth meeting

To be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, starting at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 26 May 2015*

I. Provisional agenda

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4. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building.
5. Exchange of good practices:
   - (a) Good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities;
   - (b) Seminar on post-project analysis;
   - (c) Other activities foreseen in the workplan;
   - (d) Proposed activities not included in the workplan.
6. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.
7. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance.
8. Inputs to related international processes.
9. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties.
10. Staffing of the secretariat.
11. Other business.
12. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting.

* In accordance with the accreditation procedures for meetings at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to register online no later than two weeks prior to the meeting, i.e., by 12 May 2015, through the following link: https://www2.unece.org/uncdb/app/ext/meeting-registration?id=kslZdl. Registration details are available on the website. The use of Internet Explorer browser is recommended. In case of difficulty, please refer to the online user manual (https://www2.unece.org/wiki/display/OMR/Online+Meeting+Registration+Guidelines), or contact the secretariat by e-mail (eia.conv@unece.org). On their way to the meeting, delegates should obtain an identification badge at the Pass and Identification Unit of the United Nations Office at Geneva's Security and Safety Section, located at the Pregny Gate, 14, Avenue de la Paix (see map and other practical information available from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe website: http://www.unece.org/meetings/practical.html). In case of difficulty, please contact the Convention secretariat by telephone at +41 22 917 35 70.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

1. Adoption of the agenda

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 26 May, 10–10.15 a.m.

1. The present document, setting out the provisional agenda for the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment, was prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Bureau under the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Chair of the Working Group will invite the Working Group to adopt its agenda as set out herein.

2. Status of ratification

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 26 May, 10.15–11.15 a.m.

2. The secretariat will report on the status of the Convention and its two amendments. Delegations will be invited to report on planned ratifications. The Chair will invite each Party to the Convention that has not yet ratified the two amendments to report on its preparations for ratification. In particular, delegations of the 15 States that were Parties to the Convention at the time the first amendment was adopted (27 February 2001) will be invited to provide detailed information on steps taken towards the ratification of that amendment.

3. The secretariat will also report on the status of the Protocol. Delegations will be invited to report on planned ratifications. The Chair will invite each Signatory State that has not ratified its signature to report on its preparations for ratification.

4. The secretariat will also report on interest expressed by countries outside the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region in acceding to either the Convention or the Protocol.

5. The Bureau will be invited to propose actions that might be taken to encourage accession to or ratification of the Convention, its amendments and the Protocol and, in particular, to facilitate the entry into effect of the first amendment as soon as possible.

3. Compliance and implementation

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 26 May, 11.15 a.m.–1 p.m. and 3–4.30 p.m.

6. The Chair of the Implementation Committee will report on compliance and implementation. He will present the reports of the Committee's thirty-first and thirty-second sessions (ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2014/4 and ECE/MP.EIA/IC/2014/6, respectively) and the outcomes of the Committee's thirty-third session. He will also report on the Committee's activities in follow up to decision VI/2 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention regarding Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Ukraine.

7. Delegations will be invited to consider pending cases before the Compliance Committee under the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) that are relevant also under the Espoo Convention, and to discuss ways to ensure a coherent approach to the interpretation of the two instruments.

8. In addition, the Implementation Committee Chair will present the draft modified questionnaires on the implementation of the Convention and the Protocol in the period 2013–2015 for the Working Group's consideration, as required by the current workplan (see ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3 decision VI/3–II/3). The Working Group is expected to recommend any necessary amendments to the drafts and to agree the subsequent circulation of the questionnaires. It is also expected to agree a detailed timetable, based on a Committee proposal, for the submission of completed questionnaires, and for the generation of the subsequent draft fifth review of implementation of the Convention and second review of implementation of the Protocol.

9. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation will be invited to report on the technical advice they have received on improving their legislation to implement the Convention and the Protocol to assist them in ratifying or acceding to the two instruments, as appropriate. The secretariat will also be invited to report on the planned provision of technical advice to Uzbekistan for a review of its environmental impact assessment (EIA) legislation, to be funded by Switzerland.

10. The secretariat will inform the Working Group of the work undertaken by the United Nations Office at Geneva translation group to identify and review inconsistencies between the three authentic language versions of the Protocol (English, French and Russian) and the work in progress regarding the two amendments. The Working Group will be invited to agree on further actions to be taken in this regard, including establishing an ad hoc task force, comprised of lawyers and native speakers of English, French and Russian, to prepare proposals to bring the three language versions into line for the Working Group's consideration at its next meeting.

11. In addition, as requested by both Meetings of the Parties, the secretariat will report on the publication in electronic format of the fourth review of implementation of the Convention and the first review of implementation of the Protocol, covering the period 2010–2012 (ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.1–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.1, decision VI/1, para. 2, and ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.2–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.2, decision II/1, para. 2, respectively). Finally, the secretariat will report on the electronic publication of the opinions of the Implementation Committee and their periodic revision, the electronic publication of the amended structure and functions and operating rules and the progress achieved in the preparation of guidance on the implementation of the Convention drawing on opinions of the Implementation Committee.

4. Subregional cooperation and capacity-building

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 26 May, 4.30–5 p.m.

12. Lead countries for subregional cooperation and capacity-building activities foreseen in the workplan and the secretariat will be invited to report on the outcomes of, or preparations for, activities in this area.

13. The delegation of Romania, the depository for the multilateral cooperation agreement among the countries of South-Eastern Europe for implementation of the Convention (Bucharest Agreement), is expected to report on the status of the Agreement. The countries of South-Eastern Europe will be invited to report on actions taken to increase the membership of the Bucharest Agreement and on arrangements for the first meeting of the Parties.

5. Exchange of good practices

(a) Good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities

Tentative timing: Tuesday, 26 May, 5–6 p.m.

14. The secretariat will be invited to present the terms of reference it prepared in consultation with Austria and the Bureau on the development of good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities (ECE/MP.EIA/WG.2/2015/2). The Working Group will be invited to agree on the terms of reference and establish an editorial group on the basis of nominations by Parties and other stakeholders, including Austria, Belarus, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Ukraine, the European Commission and the European ECO Forum.

(b) Seminar on post-project analysis

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 27 May, 10 a.m.–1 p.m.

15. Belarus in cooperation with Ukraine will be invited to chair a workshop on post-project analysis, as foreseen in the current workplan for the Convention and the Protocol. Detailed information on the seminar will be made available in advance. The Working Group is expected to decide on follow-up actions based on the seminar outcomes.

(c) Other activities foreseen in the workplan

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 27 May, 3–3.30 p.m.

16. Lead countries will be invited to describe their plans for workshops or half-day seminars specified in the workplan that relate to the exchange of good practices.

(d) Proposed activities not included in the workplan

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 27 May, 3.30–4 p.m.

17. Delegates will be invited to consider the implementation of activities not included in the workplan relating to the development of joint good practice recommendations on land-use planning — together with the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents and the ECE Committee on Housing and Land Management — and the holding of a half-day seminar to share experiences on legislative assistance received under the Convention and the Protocol.

6. Promoting ratification and application of the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment

Tentative timing: Wednesday, 27 May, 4–6 p.m.

18. The secretariat will inform the Working Group about the activities connected with the publication of an updated version of the Convention, including the text of the first amendment, which entered into force on 26 August 2014, and corrections aimed at aligning the three authentic texts of the Convention (English, French and Russian).

19. The secretariat and involved countries will furthermore be invited to report on: (a) the preparation of the subregional overview based on legislative reviews on EIA and strategic environmental assessment (SEA), combined with information gathered when

developing general guidance on enhancing consistency between the Convention and environmental assessment within the framework of State ecological expertise (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine); (b) the development of national guidance documents on SEA (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine); and (c) the further development and update of the Guidelines on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context for Central Asian Countries (Kyrgyzstan).

20. A representative of the International Association for Impact Assessment will be invited to report on the preparation of two-page informal pamphlets on key issues in SEA practice and to provide information on the topics selected.

21. The secretariat and involved countries will be invited to report on recent or planned workshops, including training, on the application of the Protocol, in particular for countries of South-Eastern and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. They will also be invited to report on progress in organizing pilot SEAs, as foreseen in the workplan.

22. The secretariat and involved countries will be invited to provide information on the development of legislation on SEA, and on future plans for such development.

23. The secretariat will brief the Working Group on its actions to prepare communication materials, including the preparation of videos to promote awareness about the Convention and the Protocol, and their benefits, in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

24. Delegations will be invited to propose cases in which the Protocol has been applied for the preparation of fact-sheets on the application of SEA, e.g., on industrial reconversion and investment plans or sustainable agricultural practices, to be published by the secretariat.

7. Budget, financial arrangements and financial assistance

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, 10 a.m.–noon

25. The secretariat will present the biannual financial report for the period to 31 December 2014, in accordance with the request of the Meetings of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/20/Add.3–ECE/MP.EIA/SEA/4/Add.3, decision VI/4–II/4, para. 13). The secretariat will also highlight the contributions made to the trust fund of the Convention, including any outstanding pledges.

26. The Chair will be invited to report on the proposed further measures to encourage Parties that have so far not pledged anything to make contributions, and Parties that have so far only committed limited funds or in-kind contributions to raise their contributions, during the current and future budget cycles (ibid., paras. 6–7).

27. The secretariat will report on the results of any travel outside the ECE region.

28. The Chair will also be invited to report on the consideration by the Bureau of a note prepared in 2014 by the secretariat of the ECE Environment Division regarding the funding of the ECE multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), adequate staffing and sustainability of services provided by the secretariat. The Working Group will be invited to comment, and the Bureau will seek guidance by the delegates on the direction for a decision to be adopted by the next Meetings of the Parties to ensure a more predictable and sustainable scheme of financing.

8. Inputs to related international processes

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, noon–12.30 p.m.

29. The Chair will be invited to report on the outcomes of two joint meetings of the Chairs of the bureaux of the ECE MEAs and the Committee on Environmental Policy, held on 27 October 2014 and 13 April 2015 in Geneva. The Working Group is invited to comment.

9. Preparations for the next sessions of the Meetings of the Parties

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, 12.30–1 p.m.

30. The Chair of the Bureau and the secretariat are expected to report on any offers by Parties to the Convention and the Protocol to host the seventh session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the third session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol, expected to be held in May or June 2017, and the initiation of related practical arrangements. The Working Group might advise the Bureau on further actions to be taken in this regard.

10. Staffing of the secretariat

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, 3–3.30 p.m.

31. The secretariat will report on any staff changes that have occurred since the sixth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention and the second session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol or that are anticipated.

11. Other business

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, 3.30–4 p.m.

32. Delegations wishing to raise other business should contact the Chair and the secretariat as soon as possible ahead of the meeting.

12. Presentation of the main decisions taken and closing of the meeting

Tentative timing: Thursday, 28 May, 4–5.30 p.m.

33. The Working Group is expected to agree on the main decisions taken at its fourth meeting, to authorize the secretariat to complete the report after the meeting under the guidance of the Chair and to confirm the date and venue of its next meeting.